

The Conservation for Economic Growth Coalition
www.conserve4jobs.org

September 27, 2017

The Honorable Ryan Zinke
Secretary of the Interior
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Mr. Secretary:

As entrepreneurs and venture capitalists in the Conservation for Economic Growth Coalition, we know that the value of our national monuments manifests itself in many ways – including ways that are important to economic growth. We have seen firsthand that the protection of national public lands – and the designation of national monuments, in particular – is important to the health and growth of entrepreneurial, innovative companies across America. Our employees work hard, and they play hard, and spectacular landscapes provide the inspiration which our employees value so much when they take time off for family recreation. Access to these lands helps us recruit and keep the people we need to grow our companies.

We also know that our most driven employees place a high value on outdoor recreation, making proximity to public lands and national monuments a major selling point for companies across the country that want to recruit key employees – a critical requirement for these companies' success. So plans to locate new facilities, to expand existing ones, or to make venture capital investments in companies, are based in part on the likelihood that it will be easy to recruit and maintain a high-quality work force; one of the factors in calculating that likelihood is proximity to the world-class recreational opportunities our national monuments can provide.

Your national monument review process has troubled our executives because it raised the prospect that current national monuments – already established and part of the existing recreation landscape we count on for our employees – could be completely or partially undone through opaque and arbitrary administrative actions.

Our fear that the process would be opaque and non-transparent turned out to be justified. Although you received more than 2.8 million written comments – the great majority of which the Department of Interior admits urged you not to rescind or modify any national monuments – your recommendations to the President to strip protections for these treasured public lands remained a secret with your refusal to publicly release your recommendations. Your refusal made these recommendations neither transparent to the commenters, nor to the businesses likely to be affected by his actions, nor to the members of Congress from the states where these monuments are located.

Now that the *Washington Post* has obtained a leaked copy of your report, it remains clear that this review of national monuments is a step backward for business, entrepreneurship, and investment. Not only does the report recommend large scale reductions in protections for public lands, but the sweep and scope of those recommendations lack so much detail as to create further uncertainty for our companies. There is no detail on the acres and locations by which you would shrink existing monuments, the locations within the monuments where you would change the land-use designations, or the specific nature of the management changes you would make.

Simply put, your recommendations to remove protections for our national monuments and the uncertainty created by those recommendations are bad for business. We urge the Administration to end the review process and announce as soon as possible that no public lands will lose their protection.

Thank you for your serious consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Nancy Pfund and Tom Baruch
Co-Chairs of the Conservation for Economic Growth Coalition